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By a masterstroke of fate, Dr Zhang Ya-Qin was born in the year of the Cultural Revolution and, promisingly, came of age during China's greatest economic transformation. His life is the quintessential modern Chinese miracle. Skipping five grades between primary and secondary schools, he was admitted at 12 as the youngest student to the University of Science and Technology of China. By 23, he held a doctorate from George Washington University in electrical engineering. In 1997, he became the youngest IEEE Fellow in its 100-year history. The following year, he was voted America's *Outstanding Young Electrical Engineer*. He soon won award upon award with 50 US patents, a dozen books, and some 500 influential papers and articles to his credit. Called "a treasure of the world", Zhang's star was rising and dazzling.

Conventional wisdom suggested that he remain in the US as the darling of its elite IT research establishment, but Ya-Qin answered the call to a higher purpose. By choosing to return to China, he chose uncertainty. In those days, with scant research infrastructure, China had little to entice a world-class IT scientist. However, where others saw hardship, Zhang saw a once-in-a-century opportunity. Soon, his presence attracted other world-class scientists, and the change he pioneered is still unfolding.

As Corporate Vice President of Microsoft Corporation and Chairman of Microsoft's Asia-Pacific R&D Group, Zhang is given latitude in its broad mandate: raise China while growing Microsoft. To him, China is not just a market for Microsoft products, but a place to groom talent and consolidate Microsoft's global leadership in information technology. By transforming China's IT ecosystem, he has ushered in a culture of innovation.

Among multinationals in China this generous impulse is rare. It has created a special, relationship between company and host country in which both sides win.

To achieve his vast mandate, Zhang works closely with industry, academia and government. On his own time, at his own expense, he crisscrosses the country, spreading his gospel of innovation. He dispenses advice on the boards of

張亞勤博士剛巧出生於文化大革命發生的一年，他的成長經歷了中國規模最大的經濟轉型。他的歷程是典型的當代中國傳奇。張博士中小學階段跳級五年，才12歲便考入中國科學技術大學，成為該校最年輕的學生，更於23歲時獲得喬治華盛頓大學電機工程博士學位。1997年他成為電機及電子工程師學會（IEEE）百年來最年輕的院士，並於翌年獲頒美國「傑出青年電機工程師獎」；其後，所獲的獎項及榮譽不勝枚舉。他在美國擁有50多項專利，編寫過十數本專書，並撰寫了約500篇影響甚鉅的學術論文和期刊論文。被譽為「全世界的財富」的張博士，平步青雲，如日方中。

一般人認為，留在美國一流的資訊科技公司工作，可以大有作為，張博士卻胸懷更崇高的理想。縱使當時中國前景不明，張博士卻毅然選擇回國。當年，中國研究基礎設施匱乏，難以吸引世界一流的資訊科技科學家。然而，別人眼中的艱苦條件，張博士卻認為是百年難遇的大好良機。他回國不久，已吸引不少世界頂尖科研人員紛紛而至，而他帶動的改革也逐步展現。

作為微軟公司全球資深副總裁兼微軟亞太研發集團主席，張博士肩負偉大的使命：發展微軟，同時造福中國。對張博士來說，中國不單是微軟產品的市場，亦是孕育人才的基地，有助鞏固微軟作為世界資訊科技領導者的地位。他成功改變中國資訊科技界的生態系統，締造創新文化。

在中國芸芸跨國企業之中，能有如此量度者寥寥可數。微軟成功與中國建立雙贏的特殊關係，相得益彰。

張博士不負所託，與業界、學術界及政府緊密合作。在公餘時間，他更不惜自費在內地到處宣揚他的創新理念。他為多家小型高科技公司董事會出謀劃策，並無條件為50家新創公司提供發展所需的空間及技術

many smaller hi-tech companies, and incubates some 50 start-ups with space and technical resources — with no strings attached. Under Zhang's leadership, Microsoft spends US\$300 million a year on Chinese companies, believing that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Every dollar Microsoft invests generates \$16 in partner value. With the Ministry of Education he has eight joint labs. When Chinese officials look at Zhang, they don't so much see a Microsoft man as a world-class scientist returning to help his homeland, earning his research institution the sole privilege of awarding post-doctoral degrees in China by a foreign corporation back then.

Universities are within Microsoft's catchment area. HKUST, for one, has enjoyed a 10-year association. Most of our adjunct IT professors are Microsoft veterans. Many of our graduates are on its payrolls. Our joint lab is accredited by the Ministry of Education. Zhang himself spent a month-long sabbatical here as a visiting professor of our Institute for Advanced Study.

As a Godfather of innovation, Zhang looks for talent with a creative spark and the ability to simplify the complex. By investing 15 years in building a world-class R&D center and grooming talent for his company and his native country, he has cemented a unique partnership between the world's most powerful software company and the world's most populous nation, simultaneously establishing Microsoft's second-largest base.

Zhang is equally kind to the powerful and the powerless, but there is nothing egalitarian in his rejection of mediocrity. With more than 3000 engineers and researchers, and commanding an annual R&D budget of US\$600 million, Zhang has great capacity to do big things. Winston Churchill once prophetically said: "The empires of the mind are the empires of the future." As these empires globally unfold, this hybrid soul, with a Western mind and a Chinese heart, equally celebrated in the East and West, is already a leading imperial citizen.

資源。張博士堅信同業之間可以互相借鑒，因此在他帶領之下，微軟每年投放在中國公司的資源高達3億美元。微軟每投資1美元，即可得出16美元的夥伴價值，產業輻射效應卓著。他更與中國教育部合作，在內地設立8間聯合實驗室。內地官員往往視張博士為學成回國的頂尖科學家，而非單純是來自微軟的管理層，他曾擔任院長和首席科學家的微軟亞洲研究院，亦成為中國第一間培養博士後的境外研究機構。

多所大學亦與微軟建立合作關係，科大就是其中之一，雙方合作長達十載。科大資訊科技的兼任教授大多數是微軟的資深人員，而科大不少畢業生亦投身微軟發展事業。科大與微軟的聯合實驗室獲教育部授權，而張博士本人更利用整整一個月的學術休假在科大高等研究院擔任客席教授。

張博士大力推動創新，尋找富有創新能力，又能化繁為簡的人才。他投放了15年時間建立世界一流的研發中心，為微軟及中國培養大批人才，藉此鞏固世界上最強大軟件公司與世界最多人口的國家之間獨一無二的合作夥伴關係，同時亦為微軟建立第二大基地。

張博士待人平等無私，但他無法忍受平庸。他帶領3,000多名工程師與研究員，每年的研發經費高達6億美元，絕對可以成就大業。邱吉爾曾經預言：「未來的王國是思想的王國。」譽冠中西的張博士，既有西方思維，亦擁有一顆中國心，儼然已是這帝國的領袖。